

Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ISO-00 IO-14 SAJ-01 OMB-01 PM-07 NSC-07

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PA-04 USIA-15 PRS-01 DRC-01 /125 W

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R 051000Z JUL 74

FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9786

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

USLO PEKING

CINCPAC

AMEMBASSY SAIGON

AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

C O N F I D E N T I A L VIENTIANE 5234

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PINT, LA, VS

SUBJECT: ATMOSPHERICS AT FOURTH OF JULY RECEPTION

1. AMBASSADOR'S JULY 4 RECEPTION DREW LARGE TURN-OUT, INCLUDING EIGHT OF THE ELEVEN PATHET LAO CABINET MEMBERS, PLUS A FEW OF THEIR STAFFMEN---THE FIRST PATHET LAO TO ATTEND A JULY 4 CELEBRATION SINCE 1962. HOWEVER, PRC AMBASSADOR AND STAFF NEITHER ATTENDED NOR DECLINED INVITATIONS. DRV AMBASSADOR, WHOM WE HAD INVITED IN HIS CAPACITY AS DEAN OF DIPLOMATIC CORPS, DEPARTED VIENTIANE FOR HANOI JULY WE AND NEITHER DECLINED INVITATION NOR SENT CHARGE. SOVIET CHARGE AND OILATT, AND POLISH ICC REPS ATTENDED.

2. FOREIGN MINISTER AND MRS. PHOUMI VONGVICHIT (PL) ARRIVED FIRST AT RECEPTION, IN FACT A FEW MINUTES EARLY, AND WERE FOLLOWED ALMOST IMMEDIATELY BY OTHER PATHET LAO FIGURES. ALL OF
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THEM MIXED QUITE FREELY IN THE HUBBUB, TALKING CONVIVIALY ON

NON-SUBSTANTIVE SUBJECTS WITH AMERICANS AS WELL AS LAO AND OTHER DIPLOMATS. PHOUMI FLED FROM THE HEAT INTO THE AIR-CONDITIONED RESIDENCE AND ONLY EMERGED WHEN IT WAS TIME TO EXCHANGE TRADITIONAL TOASTS FROM PODIUM WITH AMBASSADOR. ALL PATHET LAO STAYED ALMOST UNTIL CLOSING TIME.

3. VIENTIANE SIDE GUESTS, INCLUDING CABINET LEVEL FIGURES, FAR GENERAL STAFF, AND CIVIL SERVANTS, SEEMED IN BUOYANT MOOD. MANY OF THEM, PARTICULARLY YOUNGER OFFICIALS, SAID THEY WERE HEARTENED BY EVIDENCE THAT VIENTIANE SIDE LEADERSHIP IS BEGINNING TO ORGANIZE AND DEVELOP OBJECTIVES LAND TACTICS FOR POLITICAL COMPETITION WITH PATHET LAO. INFO MINISTRY OFFICIALS BOUAPHET SYGNAVONG AND KHAMCHONG LUANGPRASEUTH SAID THES HAVE FELT "OUT ON A LIMB" FOR WEEKS IN OPPOSING PATHET LAO EFFORTS TO GAIN CONTROL OF THEIR MINISTRY, BUT ARE NOW RECEIVING SUPPORT SROM COLLEAGUES IN OTHER MINISTRIES. SEVERAL LAO INDICATED THAT IN PARTICULAR, PATHET LAO FAILURE TO RELEASE EMMET KAY, PATHET LAO "DISSEMBLING" ON PRESENCE OF NVA IN LAOS, AND MOST RECENTLY PATHET LAO OBSTRUCTIONISM ON CASE OF DETAINED US PRIVATE CITIZEN ROBERT GIBSON, HAD MADE THEM AWARE OF PATHET LAO DISREGARD FOR LAOS ACCORDS AND FOR LAWS OF KINGDOM WHEN THESE DOCUMENTS DIS NOT SUIT PATHET LAO POLITICAL PURPOSES. THEY VIEWED THESE DEVELOPMENTS AS PART OF GENERAL PATTERN OF ILLEGAL ACTS BY PATHET LAO.

4. IN LIGHT OF THE VARIOUS ISSUES STILL UNRESOLVED BETWEEN THE PATHET LAO AND THE USG AS WELL AS VIENTIANE SIDE,' THE RECEPTION HAD A CONVIVIAL AND ENCOURAGING AMBIANCE. THE ONLY SOUR NOTE WAS STRUCK BY THE NEW SOVIET MILITARY ATTACHE, COLONEL TSARKOV, WHO SPENT THE EVENING BERATING VARIOUS INTERLOCUTORS WITH UNABASHED COLD WAR DIATRIBES. NOTHING TURNS OFF THE LAO FASTER THAN EXTREME POSITIONS, AND WE UNDERSTAND THAT EVEN TSARKOV'S COMMUNIST DIPLOMATIC COLLEAGUES AND SUBORDINATES CONSIDER HIM AN EMBARRASSING ATAVISM FROM THE PRE-DETENTE PAST.
WHITEHOUSE

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